[30]

779 DEVIL--rdud or rdut the evil principle, hlandey or hlandrey demon
776 or imp, drey an evil spirit, dreypho male evil spirit dreymo female evil spirit, rdud i hugus the abode of a devil, ghegs and hnot chet evil spirits tsan a class of evil spirits--a tsan is supposed to live in the nullah behind the Másho village.

428 [32]DISINHERIT TO--Ladákis can not disinherit their eldest son, However bad he may be, he must inherit the whole of his parents' property.
thopthang kok ches is to deprive a person of his inheritance.

586 DIVORCE TO--There are two kinds of divorce in Ladak, also a kind of separation by mutual consent, which amounts to a divorce, inasmuch as the parties concerned may re-marry.

586 When the eldest brother of a Buddhist family dies, his wife is at
595 liberty to divorce herself from his dead body, by tying one
768 end of a thread round the dead man's finger, and the other end round her own finger, and then breaking the thread. This ceremony is known as "skatpa chát ches." By divorcing herself from her dead husband, she frees herself of the younger brothers of her late husband. Under Ladák law, the eldest brother marries a woman, and the younger brothers share the wife. If a woman has living children she never
[428] divorces herself from her dead husband, for her eldest son, or if she has no son her eldest daughter [33] inherits the family property and the dead man's brothers remain in a subordinate position in the house. If she has no children, she often looks out for a more comfortable home.

The brothers of the dead man have no voice in the matter of this kind of divorce.

●[587] If the woman divorces herself, then the eldest surviving brother is at liberty to marry a wife of his own selection, but he must share her with his younger brothers.

586 If a Buddhist couple can't agree, they refer their case to an
779 arbitrator or "GHatpo, "who, if he thinks matters can not be amicably arranged, decides that they must "break the stick, " and thereby divorce each other. This ceremony is called "SHing chak ches" each party retains his or her own property. No stigma attaches to either party provided
586 "incompatibility of temper" is the cause of divorce. If
428 there are any small children, under 7 or 8 years, they remain with the mother till they are 7 or 8 years old, and

595 428 583 601 [597] If he has only two brothers, they both become the "de facto" husbands of his wife, but if he has more than two brothers, some of them must become Lámas (priests), or must leave the paternal roof, and make their own way in the world, as not more than two brothers can share the wife of their eldest brother. The wife addresses her real husband, that is to say, the eldest brother, who alone has gone through the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage, as "ácho" or in polite language "káGHa," while she calls the two younger brothers "no" or "káGHa chhungan".

601 The "ácho" husband speaks to his wife as "achey," while the "no" husbands speak to her as "nómo." Speaking of the wife, all brothers call her their "áney" or "zhidmat". Another person speaking of this woman and her husbands would describe the woman as being the "zhidmot" (wife), of the góboo (eldest brother) parma (middle brother), and thách hungan (little brother).

586 If the woman has no child by these husbands, other arrangements are made, but see under "Re-marriage".

595 587 According to the Ladák usage, a woman may have 3 brothers as her husbands at the same time, but she cannot (unless divorced) marry another husband while any of these brothers live. After they are all dead, she may marry another man, but as a matter of fact, she never does so, if she has any children.

583 586 A "makpa" is the husband selected by an heiress; he is generally a younger brother of a family of more than 3 brothers, and he is, therefore, glad to be married to a woman who will support him. The "makpa" is the property of his wife she can turn him out whenever she pleases, and call in another "makpa" if so inclined; but as a matter of fact this is seldom done.

478 583 If there are daughters, but no sons in a family, the eldest daughter becomes the heir to the family property, and occupies the position which the eldest son, had there been one, would have held. Instead of being given in marriage, she selects a single husband for herself, or her parents do it for her, and such a husband is called a "makpa." From this custom it may be inferred [595] that the ladies of Ladák do not approve of polyandry, for how, otherwise, can we account for the fact, that while the pauper has several husbands at the same time, the heiress has never more than one.

778 [65]IDOL--skunda or skoo. There is no invidious meaning attached to this word, a Buddhist speaks of his clay god as a "skunda."

RAVEN--chhosskiong or phorok. This bird is held in reverence and never killed. But see under "Omen." 825

[132]RECRUIT--seepa sóma. 701

[133]REMARRY TO--yáng hlokstey pakston cho ches. The first wife of a man is called his "changchhen," if she has no children, or if he is rich enough to keep two families, he may marry a second wife, who is called his "changchhungan," and if she too is childless, or if he can afford to keep three families, he may marry a third wife, who is called his "yángchhungan." So long as these three are alive, he may not marry a fourth wife. If one wife dies, another wife may be taken in her place. As a matter of fact, the Ladákis are much too poor to wish to support more than one wife in a family, and it is only the necessity for having children, who will one day relieve them of the "forced labour" duties attaching to the possession of land, that induces them to [184] remarry. If a man and his brothers have got, in common, three living wives and yet no child, they may not get another wife, but may call in to their family circle another man, to be a husband to their wives; this man is termed a "phortsak." If he too begets no child, still another man, called "pho-chhungan," may be called in. If he too is childless, the original husband and wife must resort to adoption. In the case of the death of the eldest husband of a woman, the latter is at liberty to divorce herself, in the manner described (see "Divorce)." After this she must leave her late husband's house, leaving with her husband's family any children she may have; she is then at liberty to marry again, and so on, for nine times, after which she must be content to remain a widow. If she does not divorce herself from the husband's corpse, she becomes, or rather remains, the wife of the younger brothers. She cannot remain in her late husband's house, and in possession of her children, unless she continues to remain the wife of the younger brothers. As a matter of fact, a Ladáki woman, unless she is childless, never leaves her original husband's home. In any case, it is considered improper for a man or woman to remarry within a year of the death of his, or her, wife or husband, and during this period of mourning a widower is termed "yoóksápo" and a widow "yooksámo." If 587 595 [511] [65] 597 586 768 595 768 765 587

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a man is left a widower while he is still young, he waits a year or so, and then marries a woman of his own age. Ladákis think that if elderly men marry young wives, the latter are likely to have young lovers, hence their selection of wives of their own age. In this, as in most other such matters, the Ladákis show a great deal of sound common sense.

779 [135] RESURRECTION--ró lángches. Buddhists do not believe in an
775 ultimate resurrection of the body. For an account of their ideas on this point, see under the heading "Metempsychosis." They think, however, that persons occasionally return from the dead, that is to say, that [136] after death in this world, the earthly body and spirit may return to this world for a time. Some ten years ago a Lámá came from Lhásá to Leh and gave the following account of himself, which met with general credence. He said that he had died at Lhásá and had gone to "Ngiálwa," where he had burned for some months, after which he was removed to paradise, and that while there his "konjok sum," or "Trinity," had ordered him to return to earth for a year, to warn people of the fate which awaited the wicked. He showed brands all over his body, and said that they were the divine seals placed upon him in paradise. Needless to say, he came to collect money from the simple Ladákis. A person thus returned from the dead is termed "SHeelok."

651 REVENUE--yonggo (income); bap or zhing-i-bap (the revenue ob-
652 tained by the State from the land tax). The revenue of Ladák amounts to about ₹69,000 a year, and consists of (1) Land Revenue, in cash, about ₹45,000; (2), Land Revenue, in kind, about ₹11,000; (3) produce of the Roopshoo borax mines, about R8,000; (4) miscellaneous receipts, about ₹8,000. In addition to the above, the State imposes a very heavy indirect land tax, in the shape of "beygár" or "unpaid labour," which land holders have to provide. Thus, nearly all public works are executed by "beygár," and the postal runners are really "beygáris" though they receive a nominal remuneration. The wood required at Leh for use as fuel is cut by "beygáris" at Chiling on the Zángskár frontier, and after being floated down the river to Ngieymo (Nimo), is there taken out and brought up to Leh by "beygaris." In addition to this, the free transport supplied to the Lapchhak and Chaba Missions, and to the ex-Raja, and to certain other persons, must be taken into consideration. The

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

Chapter III. B. Social and Religious Life. Custom of inheritance in Spiti.

proprietory holdings of the first class is described in Section D. In the case of the little plots held by people of the *dotul* class, father and son live on together, as the land is too small to be divided, and there are no responsibilities which the father could transfer with the land to the son. In the same way two or more brothers of this class live on together, often with a wife in common, till one or other, generally the weakest, is forced out to find a subsistence elsewhere. Working for food or wages, and not the plot of land, is the chief source of subsistence to these people. Sometimes the son of a *dotul* becomes a monk, but, as a rule, this profession is confined to the younger sons of the regular landholders, who take to it of necessity, but get as maintenance the produce of a field set aside as *tao* or *tásing* (from *tába*, another word for *lámá*). It is, however, only the second son who is entitled to claim *tásing*, and many do not take it from their elder brothers, and have all in common with him, including their income from begging, funeral fees, &c. This is to the advantage of the elder brother, as a celibate monk's expenses are of course very small. When there are more than two brothers, the younger ones, though they cannot get *tásing*, are considered entitled to some subsistence allowance from the head of the family, but in return they do certain kinds of work for him in the summer, during which season only the elder monks remain in the monasteries. For instance, as long as they are *chamba* or *getsal*, that is, neophytes or deacons, and not *gelong* or fully-ordained monks or priests, they will carry loads and do all field work except ploughing; when *gelong*, they will cook, feed cattle and sheep, and do other domestic services, but not carry loads or cut grass or wood. But "once a monk always a monk" is not the law in Spiti. Supposing the head of a family to die and leave a young widow, with no son or a son of tender age only, then the younger brother, if there is one, almost always elects to leave the monastery, and thereupon he is at once considered his brother's widow's husband. She cannot object, nor is any marriage ceremony necessary. If there was a son by the elder brother, he of course succeeds when of full age, and his mother and uncle retire to the small house, and the other sons, if any, go into the monasteries in the usual way. So, again, if the head of the family has only daughters, and having given up hope of getting a son, wishes to marry one of the daughters and take her husband into the house as a son and heir, it generally happens that the younger brother in the monastery objects, and says that he will leave the priesthood and beget a son. In such case his right to do so is generally allowed: sometimes he will marry a wife to himself, and put his elder brother in the small house; sometimes, by agreement, he will cohabit with his sister-in-law in hope of getting a son by her. A monk who throws off the frock in this way has to pay a fine to his monastery. Many decline to become laymen: this is a rule in the case of those who have attained to the grade of *gelong*. Where the *lámá* brother declines, then it is agreed that in the lower part of the valley (*i.e.*, *kothís* Pín and Sham), the father or widow-mother can take a son-in-law to live in the house and succeed as son and heir, and no kinsmen (if there are any) can object. In the upper part of the

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

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428 Chapter III, B. Social and Religious Life.
543 Custom of inheritance in Spiti.
[597]

valley this right does not appear to be so clearly established: the objections of near kinsmen are sometimes attended to, or a field or two given to them by way of compromise. Kinsmen, however, are of course very few, as the only way in which a younger brother can found a separate family is by becoming son-in-law and adopted son to another landholder. Such a man might claim on behalf of his younger son, but not on his own behalf or that of his eldest son, as it is a rule that for each holding or allotment there must be a separate resident head of the house to do service for it, as well as pay the revenue. Sometimes an illegitimate descendant of the family, who has been living on the estate as a *yáng champa*, will claim as a kinsmen and succeed, but he cannot be said to have any absolute right or title. Unmarried daughters of a landholder are entitled to maintenance from their father, brother, or nephew, that is from the head of the family for the time being; he must either let them live in his house on equal terms with his own family, or must give them a separate house and plot of land; they forfeit their claim if they go away to live in any other man's house, but no other act of theirs will entitle their father or his successor to cast them off, or resume the house and plot of land once given during their life-time. Many women live and die as spinsters in their father's or brother's houses: their chance of marriage is small, as all younger sons become monks, and the monks are bound to celibacy (except in Pín *kothí*), and bigamy is only allowed in the case of the head of a family who has no son or expectation of getting one by the wife he first marries. In case the brother-in-law of a widow does not come out of the monastery to take his deceased brother's place, or in case there are no brothers-in-law, the widow can marry again, and does not forfeit her interest in the estate by so doing so long as she continues to reside on it: on the contrary, in default of issue by the first husband, the children by the second will succeed to the estate. She can marry any person of the same class as herself: if there happens to be a near kinsman available, she would be expected to select him, but whether it would be absolutely obligatory on her to do so is not quite clear. A marriage feast is given to celebrate the event.

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776 Customs and ceremonies connected with births, marriages, funerals, &c.

The best general account of the social customs of the Botiás[1] will be found in General Cunningham's *Ladákh*; but in the country now under discussion, and especially in Láhaul, the practice of the present day be found to differ in some details. The religious ceremony consists in almost all cases in the simple reading of prayers or passages from the holy books by a *lámá*, while the whole company of men and women sit round with clasped hands and down-cast eyes, and repeat the verses after the *lámá*. The social celebration of all these events consists mainly of feasts in which much *cháng* is drunk. In Láhaul the decisive point in the negotiation for a betrothal is the acceptance or refusal of a pot of *cháng* sent to the father of the bride: if he drinks, the affair is settled without more words. In Láhaul, polyandry, or the taking to wife of one woman by several brothers, is a recognized institution, and is very general; the object is to prevent the division of estates. Mr. Lyall remembers a case which came before him in which one of two brothers living in polyandry much wished to separately marry a girl by whom he had had an illegitimate

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[1 [i.e, Tibetans. See Source #1: Cunningham, West Tibetans File. -- Analyst]

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

child, but the wife of the family objected strongly, claiming both brothers as husbands, and refusing to admit another woman into the household, and she eventually prevailed. In Spiti polyandry is not recognized, as only the elder brother marries and the younger ones become monks; but there is not the least aversion to the idea of two brothers cohabiting with the same woman, and it often happens in an unrecognized way, particularly among the landless classes, who send no sons into the monasteries.

In Spiti when the bridegroom's party goes to bring the bride from her father's house, they are met by a party of the bride's friends and relations who stop the path; hereupon a sham fight of a very rough description ensues, in which the bridegroom and his friends, before they are allowed to pass, are well drubbed with good thick switches. In Spiti if a man wishes to divorce his wife without her consent, he must give her all she brought with her, and a field or two besides by way of maintenance; on the other hand, if a wife insists on leaving her husband, she cannot be prevented from so doing; but if no fault on the husband's side is proved, he can retain her jewels; he can do so also if she elopes with another man, and in addition can recover something from the co-respondent by way of fine and damages. There is a recognized ceremony of divorce which is sometimes used when both parties consent. Husband and wife hold the ends of a thread, repeating meanwhile "one father and mother gave, another father and mother took away: as it was not our fate to agree, we separate with mutual good will"; the thread is then severed by applying a light to the middle. After a divorce a woman is at liberty to marry whom she pleases; if her parents are wealthy, they celebrate the second marriage much like the first, but with less expense; if they are poor, a very slight ceremony is used.

Corpses are ordinarily burnt, and the ashes thrown into a river, or made into a figure of the deceased, and deposited in a *chorten* or pyramidical cenotaph in the case of great men. Burning is the only practice in Láhaul, but in Spiti the dead are sometimes exposed on the hills to be eaten by wild beasts, or cut into small pieces and thrown to dogs and birds according to the custom of Great Tibet, where these beneficent methods of disposing of the body are philosophically preferred as most likely to be pleasing to the Heavenly Powers. In the public rooms of some of the Spiti monasteries you are shown masonry pillars which contain the bodies of deceased abbots buried there in full canonicals in a sitting posture.

Of polyandry, Mr. Anderson writes:—

"Polyandry exists more or less on all the three rivers of Láhaul; but it is dying out. This probably arises from an improvement in the condition of the people, which has also produced greater division of families. The custom of polyandry is now considered shameful and is not willingly admitted. The younger brothers will allege that the woman is their elder brother's wife, not theirs. Trade has very much increased during the last ten years; the male population has now many new ways of earning a living, and hence the circumstances that gave rise to this custom are disappearing and with them the custom itself. It is not customary to marry young, women being generally between fifteen and twenty years of age (*vide* Cunningham's Ladákh, page 289). Even the better classes have, as a rule,

8: Calvert G-3 (1904) 1909 A/4 W. Tibetans A/4 (
Spiti 49a

Divorce.

A son-in-law who has been adopted cannot be divorced by his wife as in Ladákh. 586

There is no custom in Spiti of a widow divorcing herself from her dead husband.

Unfaithfulness and refusal to cohabit are reasons for divorce, but incompatibility of temper is not.

In cases of divorce both parties go to the Nono.

If the woman is in fault, her jewels and *perák* (head ornament) and a pony are given to the husband. If the man is in fault, a field is given to the woman for her maintenance, but she can only retain it so long as she does not marry again. The man may re-marry. [587]

A wife's adultery is usually condoned by the present of a few rupees to the injured husband. A husband's unfaithfulness usually only results in a quarrel. A single lapse is not ground for a divorce, and only cohabitation with his paramour can give his wife right to a divorce. 586 937

Pregnancy.

A married woman wears white breeches till she is pregnant, when she wears red or black. Unmarried girls wear white breeches up to twelve and afterwards red or black. 843 292

Naming.

The name of a child is selected by a *lámo* after reference to the Sacred Books, who receives for the service a *thála*, or piece of cloth, such as is given by visitors to a monastery. 553 793

When naming the child, the *lámo* places a little bit of cloth upon it, or, if the child be not present, sends the cloth to its parents.

In every monastery *kesar*, or green, water is kept; *i.e.*, water in which *késar*, saffron, has been placed. And sometimes, but not always, when naming a child, the *lámo* sprinkles it with *késar* water.

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by people who cannot write, is a sign of the well-being 000

8: Calvert G-3 (1904) 1909 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4
[P. 50a] Spiti

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It must be remembered that in a land where only the eldest son marries and all the younger sons are celibate, a sonless land-owner naturally has no relations in the male line to adopt.

d.—Where there is a childless widow.

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If a man dies childless, his widow first marries his younger brother. Failing him, she may marry any man of her husband's *got*. But the land is considered her property till she has borne a son, who, on attaining his majority, steps into the *khang chhen*.

Cremation.

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Coffins are not used in Spiti for want of wood. Corpses are carried in a sitting posture to the burning-ground either on a man's shoulder or in a blanket held by four men.

II.

Social Ideas.

Asceticism.

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Hermits exist and are said to subsist on nothing but tea and one morning meal.

Excommunication.

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A man can be excommunicated for eating with a man or cohabiting with a woman of lower caste than himself. The decision is announced by public proclamation.

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The *lâmas* taking no part in this, but they turn out a *lâma* who misbehaves himself and he is never taken back in any circumstances.

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An excommunicated layman can be received back into caste after ceremonies. He has to read a book on *shakspa* or penitential offerings, burn a lamp in front of a *deota*, feast the *lâmas*, and may be ordered to make 100 or 1,000 prostrations before some *deota* in a monastery.

Leprosy.

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Leprosy is found in one village in Spiti, ascribed to the water of a spring, wherein lives a devil, Chutalwâ.

If a man passes the spring on a day when the devil happens to be present, he is liable to get leprosy.

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A leper is not allowed to marry, but if married, he is not separated from his wife. He feeds by himself in a separate room and the villagers will not eat with him.

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

586 gaiety does not stand the test of time, divorce can be obtained by payment of an animal. The Ladaki proverb thus states [638] the situation : " If the husband is turned out he can demand a pony, but the wife can expect a cow." The horse and cow given need only be strong enough to walk round a dunghill. If one of the pair dies and was the owner of the house, the living partner is tied by a piece of string to the corpse of the other, and when the string is broken by pulling on it, the marriage-tie is also broken. Such means are only resorted to if the living partner wishes to leave the house, but he or she may remain if preferred. In the former case nothing need be paid on leaving the house, and the party's own goods may be taken away also. Thus each takes his or her own property, and the one who was brought to the house must also pay for a large part of the wedding festivities.

583 Obviously the easiest method of marrying is by stealing, after which it is also much easier to divorce. An additional advantage to the young people is that they may choose each other instead of being subject to their parents' selection. [565] Also little care is taken to preserve class.

586 If the divorcée returns to her parents' home, she is not
614 allowed to enter her parents' temple, and sometimes she is not even allowed to sit in front of their fire-place, because at marriage she joined another *paspun*.

● 587 A man or woman may marry a second time, but there are
595 no wedding festivities. Should the first wife bear her husband no children, he may take a second one or *Chanchung*. If possible she should be the younger sister of the first wife, if not, a cousin or near relation. If she produces no posterity, the husband must do without. The first wife retains priority of rank. even though the second becomes a mother. If a *magpa* and his bride have no children, a *Chanchung* is brought for the *magpa*, she being a near relative of the heiress.

595 Before leaving the subject of marriage, we must say a little more about the customs of polyandry, as Ladak is one

773 same time of the "stupid devil" of Europe.
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/17/ The Seven and the Eighteen Agus

773 Aside from Kesar, the eighteen or seven Agus, so-called, are
805 the greatest heroes of the Kesar saga. Kesar is the leader of these
776 heroes, and together with him they form a group of nineteen beings whom I am inclined to regard as personifications of an old calendar. The days of the week seem to have found their embodiment here, and perhaps the months, insofar as a connection exists between them and the constellations of the zodiac.

773 About the origins of the Agus we read in the Lower Ladakhi Ver-
776 sion of the Kesar saga (Lower Ladakhi Version, I, "Prologue to the Kesar Saga"):† The forefather bKra-shis, together with his wife, seeded a field on which only a single tree was growing. From its fruits worms arose that ate one another until at the end only a single giant worm was left. This worm turned into a beautiful child, for whom eighteen brides were sought. All the brides became pregnant as soon as they looked at the child, and from them the eighteen Agus were born.

196 The word A-gu is the dialectal form of the Tibetan word A-khu,
● [582] which means "uncle," "father's brother," but which in Western
773 Tibet can also mean "husband." The last-named meaning may be
776 connected with the fact that the brothers of the master of the house have a claim upon the master's wife. Moreover, it should be remembered that among the Dard of mDa, the word Mum-mo, which also means "uncle," is used, in their old songs, in the sense of "forebears." Some of this last meaning may also have penetrated into the Tibetan word A-gu.

773 The order of the eighteen Agus is given as follows in the para-
776 graph of the Kesar saga (Prologue):

1. Pasan-ldan-ru-skyes, with a goat's head.
2. An-gar-rtsans-po, with a lizard's head.
3. Khrai-mgo-khrai-thun, with a hawk's head.
4. Kha-rgan-ga-ni, with a white beard.
5. sKya-ba-rgod-po, with a ladle for a head.
6. Zla-ba-bzan-po, with a moon for a head.
7. mDa-dpon-gon-ma, with an arrow tip for a head.
8. A-la-jon-gol, with a boot sole for a head.
9. aBu-dra-lam-bstan, with an insect's head.
10. Shel-gyi-bu-zhun, with a mirror for a head.

† [See pp. 1-8, cat. 116 for references, --Analyst]

595 she and her husband actually owned two
583 houses and they had what, on the surface,
428 looked like an ordinary monogamous marriage However, the two properties were not amalgamated. The woman was to carry on the name of Bata and the man that of the Tsungarpa house. Consequently, of the three boys which issued from this marriage, the first two inherited the Tsungarpa house, while the youngest inherited his mother's house and was entrusted with carrying on the name of that family.

[428] One of the sons of these three brothers,
842 Murup, inherited the Bata house from his
● 587 uncle, but remained childless after twenty
562 years of marriage. In such a case, oddly
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842 587 562 357 [IC4] enough, the Tibetans seem to think that it is the husband's fault and they usually take in another man, in the hope that there will be children. Such a man is known as a *porsag*, that is, a man brought in for the purpose of fathering a child. However, when I asked this woman why she had remarried, if it was because she had no children, or because her husband was too old, she said, "No, those are only the official reasons." After I gained her confidence, she told me that she had married the second husband because she needed a servant in the house, and she found it cheaper to have another husband than to have a servant she would have to pay!

581 177 If a Tibetan woman marries a Mohammedan, she has to leave the polyandrous practice and becomes a member of the usual Mohammedan family system. The woman always takes the husband's religion, so that a Moslem girl who marries into a Buddhist family becomes polyandrous.

595 Now it must not be imagined that polygyny (where a man has a number of wives) does not exist in Tibet. One occasionally finds a case as when a young man goes on a long voyage and meets a girl of his choice and his brothers agree to bring her into the house. Thus, in Rupchu, I have seen three brothers sharing two wives, so that anything seems to be possible among the Tibetans and, on the whole, the system seems to work very well.

584 593 588 The children in Tibet are betrothed when they are 10 or 12 years old, usually by the parents. But this is not always the case. Very often the eldest boy chooses a wife himself, and his brothers and the other members of his family have to accept this woman as the common wife; they have no choice in the matter. But there is yet another custom in the Tibetan family which to us Westerners appears extraordinary indeed. As soon as the children are married, the parents are obliged to leave the house and the children take over. The father and mother must go to live in a smaller house, usually on